



Grant Details

80683 - FY20 Region/CVB Marketing Plan

86704 - FY20 Miles City CVB Marketing Plan

DOC Office of Tourism

Grant Title: FY20 Miles City CVB Marketing Plan
Grant Number: 20-51-020
Grant Status: Underway
Comments:
Applicant Organization: Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce
Grantee Contact: John Laney
Award Year: 2019
Program Area: DOC Office of Tourism

Amounts:
Contract Dates: Contract Sent: 06/13/2019, Contract Received: 07/01/2019, Contract Executed: 06/30/2020
Project Dates: Proposal Date: 06/13/2019, Project Start: 07/01/2019, Project End: 06/30/2020
Grant Administrator: Barb Sanem
Contract Number: 20-51-020
Award Year: 2019

Contract Dates

Contract Sent Contract Received Contract Executed Contract Legal

Project Dates 07/01/2019
06/30/2020

Project Start Project End

Comments
Amendment Comments

Community & Brand Support

Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges. How does your destination align with Montana's brand pillars?

The Miles City CVB includes Miles City and an area surrounding the city limits for approximately 50 miles. The area consists mostly of badlands, flatlands, rolling hills, and unique sandstone formations. The badlands are to the north and east spreading all the way to Terry, Montana. These badlands are home to the majestic Calypso Trail as well as the Scenic Drive. The rest of the surrounds are predominately a mix of flatland and rolling hills. Sandstone formations are common and make interesting subjects for photographers as well as those interested in the effects that nature and time have on these soft and ever-changing soils. The flatlands and rolling hills have proved to be very fertile soil to sustain many types of agricultural crops as well as a great place to raise livestock. This area is also known worldwide for its vast array of wildlife. It is home to deer, both mule and whitetail, antelope, and elk making it a hunter or photographers paradise. Miles City is bordered by rivers to the west and north. The Yellowstone River, the longest free-flowing river in the world flows on the north side of Miles City and it welcomes the water of the Tongue River on the west side. The Yellowstone River, known as a pristine trout stream on the western side of the state changes dramatically as it flows east and becomes home to a completely different type of fishing in our area. It supports such species as walleye, catfish, sturgeon, northern pike, bass, and the prehistoric paddlefish. It also offers the bird hunter or watcher a vast array of birds such as ducks, geese, cranes, pelicans, and bald eagles in the "big bird" category all the way to fench and wild canaries. Along with fish and birds the river is also a great place to hunt for the Montana moss agate, unique to the Yellowstone River.

The Miles City area is a mecca for all kinds of history buffs. Fort Keogh, originally a remount station for the Cavalry is located in Miles City. It is now a USDA Range Experiment Station but many signs of the original fort still exist. This area was the site of many an Indian battle and is becoming more chronicled by the day bringing many more visitors interested in native American history here. Much of the residential area of Miles City is designated as the Historical District with homes built for Army officers, Railroad Executives, and cattle barons. Miles City has always taken pride in their ability to welcome people to our community. For the last 69 years Miles City has been home to the Bucking Horse Sale. The third full weekend in May, the sale brings people from all over the world to Miles City to take part in what has become known as The Cowboy Mardi Gras. This event doubles the size of the town for the four-day event.

Miles City is located on I-94 but is also a hub of Highway 59 north and south and highway 12 from the east. We are the shopping, medical, and business hub of eastern Montana. The size of our town and the ease and convenience of getting here makes us a destination for meetings, sports tournaments, meetings, and now small to mid

size conferences.

Miles City offers a lot of things for a lot of visitors. From hunters to photographers we have wildlife, history buffs can learn about the old west, native Americans, the cavalry, the early farms and ranches of Montana, and the architecture of the 1800s. They can also find culture in the Waterwork Art Museum, as well as local theatre and music or do nothing in one of our local watering holes. We are proud of our town and the area around it, and the events we put on. That is both who we are and what we have to offer to the world and that is what we feel will come for the first time. What they find will bring them back.

Miles City is not without challenges as we have pointed out before. This year we have another big one looming over our heads. As mentioned in years past we have no commercial air service, and while we continue to work with fixed wing operations we have not been successful in bringing one to town. This summer and next will be particularly troublesome due to the fact that MDT is changing out the interstate bridge over the broadus interchange. This is the route into town from the south. It is also the home for all of our motels so we will need to monitor this situation very closely.

Finally how do we align with Montana's brand? Miles City is a vibrant and charming small town, we are surrounded by spectacular unspoiled nature, we offer breathtaking experiences daily, as well as relaxing hospitality. We just need the opportunity to show this off. By being a good steward of our bed tax funds it is our plan to capture visitors and show off what Miles City is.

Describe your destination.

We will inspire visitors with our area landscape, outdoor recreational offerings such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, and photography opportunities. We will also showcase our western history, native history, and military history. We will accomplish this through social media, radio and TV, print advertising, as well as partnering with Visit Southeast Montana and MOTBD. We will keep our website fresh and colorful with current photos and banners chronicling past, present, and future events.

We will help the orientation process by offering events that showcase what we are offering to the visitor. We have a varied inventory of attractions so it is necessary to highlight all of our offerings. We will accomplish this as stated before with a combination of social media and various forms of timely advertising. With our VIC in our office we can also offer hands on word of mouth assistance.

As stated above we offer the Miles City VIC offering us the ability to assist visitors on a much higher level. We are also the Miles City Area Chamber of Commerce so we have the ability to capture the visitor from a different venue. We have the ability to actually sit down and help make plans, not only for their time in Miles City, but for the rest of their time in Montana.

Optional: Include attachments here

a. Define your target markets (demographic, geographic and psychographic).

ITRR as well as Arrivalist defines our target market as being from Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Colorado, Washington, Idaho, Nebraska, Texas and Montana. It would suggest visitors that are driving to the two National Parks. We are seeing visitors from Idaho and Washington lately which would indicate a merging market. Due to sample size in our area from ITRR it is difficult to dial it in but Arrivalist has given us great research figures. We lean toward families searching for history and the western experience, Native American and cavalry history, and dinosaur enthusiasts. The fall brings hunters and fishermen of all ages, predominantly male, but that falls off as the seasons close. We have a large base of people seeking the beauty of the badlands, in all four seasons. We still see people following the Lewis and Clark Trail, usually a bit older visitor with no real time schedule, and as with most small eastern communities our sports and school events bring a great deal of traffic to Miles City.

We will target the outdoorsman, both for hunting, fishing, and photography, the western history and culture visitor, the Indian and dinosaur follower, as well as sports and community event goers. We will also look into the visitor that is looking to just relax. Our way of life is very inviting to many people.

b. What are your emerging markets?

We think one of the biggest emerging markets is nature photography. With the quality of cell phone cameras more and more people are paying attention to their surroundings for the possibility of that breathtaking shot. We live in some of the most naturally photogenic areas available to the traveler. From sandstone formations to the northern lights pictures happen day and night. Another market we are looking at is the snowmobiler. We are seeing many North Dakota and Minnesota vehicles loaded with machines headed to the Bighorn Mountains. That makes us a great overnight stop. We have also increased our efforts to market both the Range Riders Museum and the Waterwork Art Museum with multiple funding sources to increase visitations for their events as well as their day to day visitations.

Optional: Include attachments here.

c. What research supports your target marketing?

We can see where the biggest segments of our visitors are coming from based on ITRR data and we can see from collection reports the best and the worst of times. We can see upticks during the hunting seasons, we know that summer is obviously our biggest time of the year. Going back to our emerging markets we are seeing movement in the early fall and late spring which leads us to believe that we are seeing the older traveler, or snowbird, but also that we are seeing people spending time before or after the summer rush. One other sign we have been watching for the last few years are the crowds at the BHS. The sale always was the week before college finals in Montana and we would see the college students having one last fling. Now college gets out before the sale and the crowds are still big and maybe growing some. We sell the advanced tickets for the BHS and learn a lot about the folks that are coming and it is an older, more financially comfortable crowd. Many taking extra time to see other parts of the state while they are here. Who doesn't like the old west?

Our goals are to bring more visitors and promote longer stays. It is also a goal to cultivate repeat visitors. We want to increase our average stay to 1 from .8. We will encourage event sponsors to plan in advance so we can have a schedule of events far enough out so that people can plan ahead for return visits.

We will work much closer with Visit Southeast Montana to promote Miles City as well as the rest of the region for day trips.

We will promote the Range Riders Museum as well as the Waterworks Art Museum with a combination of available funds.

We will get involved with joint ventures as affordable along with actively participating in the new initiative plan.

Continue to work with the Chamber and the BHS to provide an avenue for magazine articles and advertising (free of Charge)

Increase our web presence as well as TV by using commercial footage as banner material with the same ad.

We will always be mindful of the State Brand as it pertains to us as a community

a. In what types of co-ops with MTOT would you like to participate?

We have never felt we had the funds to enter into any joint ventures but with some of the ideas coming out of the initiative plan we will try to become a player in some of the opportunities. The similarities with the communities in the 94 corridor should make it more affordable and compatible for all of us to market together holding each communities cost down.

Optional: Include attachment here.

b. In what other types of co-ops would you like to participate? (Regions/CVBs, etc.)

With the Initiative in its infant stages we think that rather than formulating a plan we would like to wait back, study the research that is forthcoming, and be part of developing a plan at a later date. We are fully committed to the success of the initiative and feel working with the other CVB, and Visit Southeast Montana, with the help of the MOTBD some good stuff should happen.

c. What types of co-ops have you done in the past? Were they successful - why or why not?

As stated before we haven't done many joint ventures in the past. Also as stated before we do plan to this fiscal year.

Optional: Include attachments here.

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Marketing Segment, Method & Budget

Marketing Segment	Marketing Method	Describe your method.	Provide supporting research/statistics.	How do you plan to measure success?	Provide a brief rationale for this method.	Estimated budget for method.	Marketing Method Evaluation	Add'l Atchmnt
Consumer	Printed Material	Miles City CVB plans to print a promotional brochure for Miles City. We will craft the brochure to inform our target markets as described by ITRR and	We will utilize beginning inventory of the piece versus the ending inventory to judge the reception of the piece to monitor it's	We plan to measure the success based on of printed materials being designed, created and produced on time and on budget. We will also use the metric on production counts, distribution	We will produce a value piece to describe things to do and see in Miles City. We will be careful to keep it fresh and to make sure it is pertinent to all	\$3,000.00	No funds were spent in FY20 as the timeline to produce was interrupted by the negative impact of COVID19 which hit in early spring 2020. We were unable to produce the piece,	

		Arrivalist. We will target growing markets such as nature photography and day travelers.	value.	counts and deem the project successful if our objective to create and distribute printed promotional materials is met.	our market segments. We will base its content on available research.		however, we will continue the project in FY21 and have budgeted for this method.	
Consumer	Radio & Television Advertising	We will use research made available from all avenues especially ITRR and Arrivalist. We will utilize this to reach our most important target audiences. We will also study demographics and geographical reach so as to place our ads in the best areas to secure the visitors we are trying to reach. We will use cost as a criteria.	Miles City CVB uses coverage maps, formats, cost, and demographics to justify placements for both Radio and TV. We will tag all ads with an address to afford the availability of analytic results as well as on site event monitoring for results of success or not.	We plan to measure success of radio and television promotion by analyzing the audience reach of the stations and radio programs used. If we are able to expand our messaging using this method so that a larger audience that is provided by radio/tv is reached than we will consider this a success. We will provide audience reach for each radio station or program as a measurable metric.	The Miles City CVB would like to use \$2,000.00 for radio advertising and \$4,000.00 for TV advertising. Please see attachment about radio advertising. As far as TV, we have found for our money the best placement is with KULR in Billings. All our placements, both radio and TV will be 30 seconds in length utilizing the best affordable run times. Radio will always be run 6 am until 7 pm. TV will be best placement for the targeted audience.	\$6,000.00	This method was successful as we met our objective to reach a greater audience through radio and television broadcast than we could have with other mediums. The combined monthly audience is 75,000 area listeners. We scheduled and ran :30 promotional spots (6am-7pm) on local and regional broadcast stations in Glasgow, Sidney, Billings, as well as Spearfish, SD. and occasionally Dickinson, ND. These stations give us audience reach from Rapid City SD. and Bismarck ND. to the east to Douglas WY. To the south and Columbus MT. to the west and the Canadian border to the north/ This is an audience within a 300 mile radius than includes four states (Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming). The messaging promoted events and the area up until late February when COVID19 restrictions impacted travel and our strategy. COVID19 eliminated our biggest annual event, the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale and Rodeo and therefore we did not use method from March-June 2020. Television ads ran on local ABC/FOX affiliates KULR-TV (Billings, MT), and ABC/Fox Montana (Missoula, Great Falls, Helena, Butte-Bozeman). Exact viewer audience count not available but on file with Cowles Montana Media. In addition, this method is a successful tool to match funds invested by the TBID and to compliment other methods such as print advertising. Ad copy and	RationaleRadioTVMethod.pdf

							<p>affadavits of broadcast are on file with the organization.</p> <p>We will continue to use this method to expand our audience reach to a 300 mile radius in the future.</p>	
Consumer	Print Advertising	<p>We wil place ads in the most effective places based on demographics utilizing the locations we are attracting the most visitors based on research from places like ITRR and Arrivalist. We will ad website addresses and phone numbers as a more timely approach to research also.</p>	<p>Our placements will be directed toward were we see as the most visitations based on as many avenues as possible such as ITRR and Arrivalist. We will monitor success based on event attendance and inquiries received at our office. We will monitor success based on those numbers as well as how it is performing in our quest to increase overnight stays ffrom .08 to 1.</p>	<p>We plan to measure success of print advertising based on the distribution of publications that include the CVB print advertisements. We will report publication distribution counts and provide copies of print advertisements. We will consider the method successful if we meet our objective to distribute printed advertisements that increase awareness of specific promotions and the CVB brand.</p>	<p>Miles City sponsors many events with a varied demographic so placements of print ads is a challenge. We have many western events, but we also have art shows, sporting events, bluegrass festivals, classic cars shows, a four day fair, new walking trails, and we will target new markets as they are identified such as nature photography. Print ads are a great way to get in front of the right people for the each event as well as general advertising.</p>	\$5,000.00	<p>We consider this method successful as we were able to place print advertising in desired publications thus meeting our objectives. We placed advertisements in these publications:</p> <p>Southeast Montana Travel Guide - 150,000 print copies; see ad copy attached in Miscellaneous section</p> <p>Miles City Event Guide, 6 part publication - 2,500 print copies per publication; see ad copy attached, same ad was used in the SEMT travel guide</p> <p>We plan to continue using the print advertising method in the future to increase awareness of specific promotions and the CVB brand.</p>	PrintAdvertisingSEMTravelguideMilesCity.pdf
Consumer	Website/Internet Development/Updates	<p>The Miles City CVB has plans to expand our website to make event attendance planning more user friendly. The Miles City Chamber office serves as a clearing house for tickets to almost all events. It is our hope that we can develop a way to track locations of the attendees as well as get a feel for pre-attendance</p>	<p>We have great analytics at our disposal to see the effectiveness of our site. Our plans to measure success is based on the same structure we utilize as research. These numbers give us great direction as well as a great measure of success. We want to see increases in all of our measureables or to</p>	<p>We plan to measure success by tracking and analyzing website analytics and comparing to previous years or specific campaigns. We will consider the method successful if we continue to maintain or grow engagement as</p>	<p>We have found that all the research says "Fresh is Best" so that is our direction. Our current analytics (April 24, 2018 - April 29, 2019) show Average visitor per day is 287 or 104,755 per year. Visitors are averaging 3.17 minutes staying on the site. Visitors go to an average of 6.27 pages per visit.</p>	\$4,000.00	<p>This method was successful. Although not all funds were completely spent in FY20 due to reallocating budget to methods that needed more due to COVID19 and our change in strategy to invest more in print and radio/tv. Because we have a solid website presence built over the past few years we were able to rely on the existing site and perform routine maintenance and updates. Compared to prior years visitors per day to the site is up by 56, average length on page is up 5% (was trending to be up by 10% until COVID19 changes), our search engine visitor is up by 11%, facebook followers is up by 5%. Website analytics report that we get 77% of our traffic from mobile devices and 23% from desktops. To date analytics show daily</p>	

		numbers. Also by being event specific we can also push lodging bookings increasing overnight stays.	be able to identify were we need to change.	demonstrated by likes, followers, shares, downloads, etc.	Search engine referrals account for 44% of our visitors, facebook another 38% and the final 18% from othersources.		visitors at 304 or 110,960 annually, Ave visit time is 3.2 minutes with 4.14 pages per visit. Search engine generation has changed a bit with 51% from there, facebook 36% and misc. 13%. 65% are from mobile devices and 35% from desktop. This change is probably due to people being at home rather than traveling this year. milesychamber.com We plan to continue using the method to have an engaging web presence.	
Marketing Support	Administration	The Miles City CVB uses its admin. budget for rent and office supplies as needed to do the operations of the Miles City CVB as well as house the local VIC for Miles City and other cities, regions, the State of Montana, and surrounding states. This is a year round facility offering both information and a one on one experience for our visitors.	We have a defined goal based on much research and using our admin. dollars to the best of our abilities while staying within our 20% of total budget and in accordance to rules and regs is our goal.	Administration expenses are necessary to ensure the continued operation of the CVB. We will measure our success based on adhering to the 20% maximum threshold as per the Rules and Regulations governing bed tax funds.	We utilize these funds in accordance with the rules and regs. being mindful to not exceed 20% of the total budget.	\$5,490.00	We consider this method successful. We budget for Administration to cover costs associated with the operation of the CVB. We stayed within budget. The challenge was that we had expenses that we would not have had in a normal year that were contributed to COVID19. We accomplished our goals within the 20% even with the added budget burden. We will continue to use this method in the future.	
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	We will use the budgeted funds to attend TAC and Governors Conference meetings. We will only request reimbursements for legal expenses as written in the rules and regs.	The information gathered at these meetings is vetted by TAC and MOTBD for its value to us and our operation. It is proven to be more efficient to gather as group to network and receive updates on state activity and industry issues.	We plan to measure success through the attendance of the executive director at all quarterly TAC meetings, both virtual and in person as well as the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation. We will be successful if the executive director attends all meetings and stays within the budget.	The Miles City CVB uses bed tax funds to offset travel expenses incurred attending TAC meetings as well as the Governors Conference on Tourism.	\$2,500.00	We were successful in meeting the objectives. The executive director attended three of the four required TAC meetings, the assisrant CVB director attended in place when the ED was unavailable due to medical reasons. The Governor's Conference was cancelled due to COVID19, but the executive director would have attended if held. We stayed within allowed budget. We will continue to use this method in the future and attend all required meetings and the Governor's Conference.	
				Because the specific details of the Joint Ventures are not known			No funds were spent in FY20. As with our strategy for other	

Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	We are excitingly awaiting this plan to roll out and plan to play a very active roll in its success.	We will make sure that anything we enter into has been fully researched.	during planning stages, we must decide on measurement once the Joint Venture is identified and then use the appropriate metrics and evaluation standards such as participation, earned media, distribution, etc.	The Miles City CVB is going to allocate funds to actively participate in the Eastern Montana Initiative.	\$7,000.00	methods, it was interrupted by COVID19 and spring projects were cancelled or postponed. We will continue to use the method in the future and take advantage of Joint Venture opportunities as soon as they present themselves.	
Marketing Support	Cooperative Marketing	We want to have a line item with the new initiative coming so as to be able to participate.	We will make sure that anything we enter into has been fully researched.	While no specific cooperative marketing projects are in place when the plan is developed, our overall strategy includes using cooperative marketing as opportunities arise. We will measure the success using appropriate and relevant metrics based on the cooperative marketing project(s).	This is a placeholder in case a project would come up that would benefit the Miles City CVB and one of our partners.	\$1,000.00	We participated in one cooperative marketing project/fam/press trip/media relations with Southeast Montana to host a dinner for nine influencers attending the TBEX conference in Billings fall of 2019. Only \$300 was spent on the hosting project. It was our intention to show off our western heritage. One of the events was a roping exhibition. In addition to earned media, all of the influencers that came to Miles City spontaneously participated in the calf roping exhibition. We partnered with SEMT. when they brought the TBEX influencers to Miles City and we shared the summary as an attachment. As it shows total mentions are 88, reach total is 9.6M and total publicity value was \$21.5K. We more than met our objective when the influencers all started roping and taking photos of each other. They loved the "wild west". From their arrival in town at noon they warmed up to our Western hospitality. We guided them to local speciality experiences at the Range Riders museum, the historic Montana Bar, the Tongue River winery, and ended the day with dinner at a locally owned steak house that serves local beef and other menu items. We have requested a list of influencers and their countries along with links to online stories but haven't received the to date. When we do we will keep them on file along with a copy of the itinerary. This was hugely successful and we would definately do this type of thing again.	FY20 TBEX Reportings.pdf

Marketing Support	Joint Ventures	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Administration	\$5,490.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	Opportunity Marketing	\$3,456.00	\$0.00
Marketing Support	TAC/Governor's Conference meetings	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
		\$24,446.00	\$0.00
		\$45,306.00	\$0.00

Miscellaneous Attachments

Description	File Name	File Size
pie chart fy 20	pie chart FY20.xlsx	16 KB

Reg/CVB Required Documents

Description	File Name	File Size
compliance forms	FY20_Tax_Mplan_Compliance.pdf	271 KB

